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Senior Health and Wellness Newsletter

Kentucky Department for Aging and Independent Living

Fats: The Good vs. The Bad

Foods containing fats are abundant in our daily food choices. Intake of fats can have a profound effect on our health. However, we should not eliminate fat from our diet because it provides essential nutrients.

In order to ensure we are getting what we need, we must first understand the different types of fats and the recommendations relating to them. Fats are a concentrated source of calories. Fats also help the body to absorb Vitamins A, D, E, and, K.

It is recommended that we consume 20-35% of our total calories per day from fats. This is about 50 to 75 grams of fat per day. Keeping your fat intake within this range and choosing healthy fat sources will help to prevent chronic diseases while allowing you to get the essential nutrients that fats provide.

Types of Fats

Saturated Fat

Saturated Fats are solid at room temperature and come mostly from animal sources. Saturated fats are used by the body for normal daily functions.

However, our body can make all the saturated fat that we need. Therefore, we do not need to get it from our diet. Saturated fats contribute to high levels of LDL cholesterol, which increases our risks for coronary heart disease. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, coronary heart disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S. It is recommended that less than 10% of our total calories come from saturated fat, which would be less than 20 grams per day.



Trans Fat

Approximately 80% of trans fats are created during the processing of foods. Trans fats increase our LDL cholesterol. Since trans fats are not a necessary part of our diet, we should limit them as much as possible.

Cholesterol

Cholesterol is used by the body for daily functions and structural purposes. However, the body can make all the cholesterol it needs, so there is no need to get cholesterol from our diets. It comes only from animal products. We get it mostly from eggs and meats. It is recommended that we keep our cholesterol intake to less than 300 mg per day to help maintain normal blood cholesterol levels.

Limiting saturated and trans fats can be done by making healthier choices, like:

- Consuming less cheese, pizza, desserts, sausage, bacon, and franks.
- Replacing solid fats like butter and lard with vegetable oils when cooking.
- Using fat-free or 1% milk, or trimming fat from meats.
- Reading food labels.

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Monounsaturated and Polyunsaturated Fats

Fats that contain monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats are usually liquid at room temperature. They contribute essential fatty acids and vitamin E to the diet. Replacing saturated and trans fats with monounsaturated and polyunsaturated lowers both total cholesterol and LDL cholesterol. Monounsaturated Fats can be found in nuts, vegetable oils, canola oil, olive oil, and avocado. Polyunsaturated Fats can be found in soybean oil, corn oil, safflower oil, canola oil, walnuts, flaxseed, and fish.

Most of the fat we eat should come from unsaturated sources. Keep in mind that all fats are high in calories, so we do not want to get too much of any type.

Use the food label to determine the types of fats in the food you consume and help keep you below the recommended amount.

Nutrition Facts		Amount/Serving	% DV*	Amount/Serving	% DV*
Serv Size 1 Tbsp (14g) Servings: About 24 Calories 80 Calories from Fat 80		Total Fat 8g	12%	Cholesterol 0mg	0%
		Sat Fat 2.5g	13%	Sodium 85mg	4%
		Trans Fat 0g		Total Carb 0g	0%
		Polyunsat Fat 3g		Sugars 0g	
		Monounsat Fat 2.5g		Protein 0g	
		Vitamin A 15% • Vitamin D 15%			
		Vitamin B6 35% • Vitamin B12 20% • Vitamin E 15%			
*Percent Daily Values (DV) are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.		Not a significant source of dietary fiber, Vitamin C, Calcium and Iron			

INGREDIENTS: Natural Oil Blend (palm fruit, soybean, fish, canola and olive oils), water, plant sterols; contains less than 2% of salt, sorbitan esters of fatty acids, monoglycerides of vegetable fatty acids, natural and artificial flavors, TBHQ (to preserve freshness), potassium sorbate, lactic acid, soy lecithin, vitamin B12, vitamin E acetate, vitamin B6, beta carotene (color), vitamin A palmitate, calcium disodium EDTA, Vitamin D3.

For more information:

- Dietary Guidelines for Americans—<http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2010.asp>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—<http://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/everyone/basics/fat/index.html>
- American Heart Association—<http://www.heart.org/>
- ChooseMyPlate.gov—<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/>

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